

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the non-final Office Action mailed April 12, 2011 in the above-identified patent application.

Claim 13 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, claims 1, 2, 5-8, 10-12 and 14-18 are the claims currently presented for examination in the present application.

Claims 1 and 11 are amended to clarify features recited thereby. These amendments are fully supported by Applicant's disclosure.

Objection to Claim 1

Claim 1 is objected to on the ground that in claim 1, line 9, the term “to face the” should be changed to “a face of.” It is respectfully submitted that no amendment to this portion of claim 1 is necessary, since this portion of claim 1 recites a positional relationship between the first load transferring surface and the second end surface of the second flanged member. In any case, claim 1 is amended to remove a superfluous recitation introduced in the Amendment of March 3, 2011.

Rejection of Claims 1, 11, 12 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 11, 12 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Watkins et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,183,562. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 11 now recite features of claim 13 which the Office Action acknowledges (Office Action, page 9) recite allowable subject matter. Watkins and the cited art does not disclose or suggest the recitations of claim 1.

Claims 12 and 16 depend from claim 11, and are therefore patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious from Buono, U.S. Patent No. 2,940,779. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

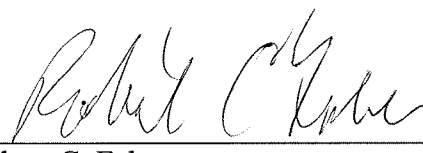
Claim 1 now recites features of claim 13 which the Office Action acknowledged (Office Action, page 9) recite allowable subject matter. Buono and the cited art does not disclose or suggest the recitations of claim 1.

Claims 2, 5-8, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 18 depend from claim 1, and are therefore patentably distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing discussion, withdrawal of the objection and the rejections and allowance of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING
SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY
THROUGH THE UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
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Respectfully submitted,



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